



Liner Notes

Tom Corrado

*. . . and maybe even include one of our private little jokes
in the liner notes.*

~ John Cusack in *High Fidelity* (2000)

Capturing Moments with Sharpies

We do not remember days, we remember moments.

~ Cesare Pavese

You could swear you've been here before
this scene from the *Age of Innocence*
but you don't remember whether you were with anyone -
anyone worth remembering that is.
You remember being upstaged at Starbucks
your five minute car wash
a five hour trance with a bumper buffer.
You can't imagine what you were thinking
so you retrieve your journal entry
and take out the Sharpies.
Your aptitude refreshed you remember
that you were trying to master
the Art of the Wheel
(Is that why your father is here?)
No, that's not it.
Return to something more telling.
The grape arbor
that summer afternoon in Sedona?
The white sandy beach in a cove
off the tip of Provincetown?
What about that walk through the snow?
Ducking into a small bistro
to get out of the rain?
Now you've become a twitching hyperbolic saint
dispensing Pez to the polloi.
More retelling. It was here before you.
These fields of dreams, these homes,
these people.
You managed to botch the last still life
and you're still in the game.
But that's the name of the game, isn't it?
Your soul - did I say soul? - wasn't into it.
Nor was your body. You were shortchanged,

but nonetheless you pocketed the coins
and smiled into the camera.
Fancy that!

Living Happily . . . After

Here, a fumbling of alternatives.
Dante's Nine Circles un-numbered,
gift-wrapped,
pharmaceuticals from the local haberdashery.
Well wouldn't that be peachy!
And you refuse to proceed without direction?
You're right, far too many
have been lost,
shooting from the hip,
especially now with things the way they are.
What? Again?
Instructions will be forthcoming.
Meanwhile, your horoscope will do.
Of course, without foreplay, words fail.
Would the real Joker please stand up?
It *was* really good.
Punctuated by trains
bumbling through crossings.
The lead-in.
Jumping right to the comments section.
Then the brakes.
Trying to apply the brakes.
Does it matter? Now?
Now that the best intentions are lost?
You'll see what I've been talking about.
And I could go on.

PBJ

Of course, the accoutrements.
The insinuation of the inevitable.
Stumbling into Starbucks
geo-caching
and you're at it again
trying to make last minute changes.
Your entrance isn't until the penultimate scene
whatever the hell that means
but, face it, it's never slowed you down,
not knowing your place
your lines
and though you have captured the envy -
no, too strong -
the curiosity, yes, the curiosity, of a landfill
you've parlayed that
in your mind, not unlike most.

More of the Same

You try to let go of the memory
but the music returns,
without images,
so you google what you recall,
picking and choosing.
Some work, dovetailing
with the spectrum of sounds
traipsing through empty rooms
which only a few days ago
held the magic that most of us -
well, maybe only the lucky ones -
enjoy for months,
sometimes years.
The etchings tell it all,
brimming with desire and ecstasy.
The path cleared, stretching out.
This will have to do.

Again

The mispaginations inconvenience.
So too the false starts,
the empty promises.
And now the restructuring.
As if a Chapter 11.
Don't you just love/hate it?
Well, if you're going to play, then?
Then what?
Then take note of the footnotes!
The footnotes?
Yes, the footnotes.
They tingle
their fascination giving new meaning
new direction
to blind alleys,
the backpedaling
a new perspective
on where you've been and where you're going.
No longer worry the can of worms
the unknown
the lost poems of Mathilde Blind.
The sum total of trifles à la Dickens.
A brand new day, yes?

And Again

And now, the holiness, the uncertainty.
Googling yourself senseless for the answer.
Looking at the question sideways.
Turning it upside down.
A Magic Eight Ball atop a pile of typos.
You check yourself out of the library
as a large print monograph and graduate -
with honors - from sidewalk cracks
to the parallel universe of the Appian Way:
a marquee player, a foolhardy candidate
for the book of latter-day dinner theaters.
This too is drama.
This too has its own hopes and dreams
its own pitfalls
its own hooks for happiness.

Crap Shoot

Tremors of love through your brief, undeniable selves, . . .

- Mark Strand

You awake to unconsciousness
to the sound of trains arriving and departing:
furniture music from a far-off country -
a country you seem to remember.
You've tried to capture the language.
They have little to say.
Hiding behind text
isn't the answer either.
Your words are compiled and forgotten.
You're anxious and confused,
your compass useless. Why bother?
The world of street corners
expands and contracts.
Cameras continue to roll.

Gathering String

We never keep to the present.

~ Blaise Pascal

You're skating on the edge
losing momentum
the farther reaches no longer a pull
the stories limp
excuses gathering string.
Refuel your late model subcompact.
GPS the snow castle
where a room awaits your laptop.
You can resume your memoir.
The last time doesn't count.
You were distracted.
You do remember, yes?

I need my (negative) space!

The endearments were lost in translation
and the nexus as they say *went south*:
upon awakening, you had a new script
and were off with

This is what I wanted!

OK, I got the rhythm
and have stopped taking the phone
into the bath -
a dimly-lit syncopation
its talking walls festooned with computer code.
And now I'll introduce the express line

(You knew I would, yes?):

standing - no, mired - in the express line
you reviewed the cacophony
and tried on re-entry for size - really? -
climbing into one, then another.

No dice. So, you figured you'd deconstruct it,
take it apart, examine its individual parts.

The easy out:

You screwed up!

Wait, are you referring to me
or to you?

Ready? Next level!

Repeat after me:

A fictional essay in 29 tangos.

Sounds like? Anne Carson. There you go.

Expected Gain

While I'm digging in the tunnel, the elves come with solutions.

- Seymour Cray

You made the pilgrimage to Cray's tunnels
but the solutions didn't come
and now you're telling the world
about simulations
standing at the curb lip-syncing an aria,
the one you carried on about
after seeing the opera
how it bathed you and filled the emptiness -
the emptiness that was always underfoot
like a stray cat
tripping you up more than once
culminating though for some strange reason
in merriment and laughter,
you arguing against

The Law of Small Numbers

insisting it was the end point that counted
trying to convince yourself as well.
You kept telling me
you're waiting for it to wear off
your voice catching
as if you wished to touch base
one more time.

You knew the path was obscured
with reports from fellow pilgrims
preoccupied with gear.
You finally opened it up
not only your life
but your living space
knocking down the wall
ripping out the carpet
sanding and sealing the floors.
I've got to hand it to you.
You pulled it off:

on clear days, you can even see the lighthouse
that long ago protected those who lived here.

Paging Through Jung's *Red Book*

She was young, of course. . . .

- Siri Hustvedt

You've misplaced your archetype and now
your unconscious is collecting itself
and leaving.
You thought you had it all worked out
but every minute brings a change.
Restate your case.
You bought into the line breaks
and realized too late
that the enjambments were a joke.
Your trust has made you untrustworthy.
I've heard it from you before:
I had to protect myself.
OK, are you now free to be the self you see
or are you clubbing onlookers
with that old - and *very tired* - *I'm confused*.
You're lucky you have time.
Those you've blindsided refuse to pick up.
I can't blame them.
Jung broke with his pal Freud
over scrambled eggs
built a scale model of his childhood village
then with gaslight
proceeded to search for his self
carve it out so to speak
renew membership in the Square One Club.
You too can be an event horizon.
You too can block hostile takeovers by those
laying claim to your *inner beauty*.
It's all here in the pages of Jung's *Red Book*.

Awash with Nuance

Then suddenly they resurface
and you wonder the nuance.
Or, maybe you don't.
Or, maybe you look to make sure what?
That your shoes are on the right feet?
That your iPad is loaded?
We're all expendable
at least as far as the elements are concerned.
Or the elementals.
And wouldn't it be interesting
if on a given day
the DVDs you've been religiously stacking
and paying homage to
displayed identical images?
Your past lovers assemble
in the town square
and coalesce into the one you await
or will await
or awaited
or whatever
assuming of course you *are* the self you claim -
the one he/she told you would arrive
when you least expected it.



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